BULLETIN
of the
Chicago Herpetological Society

Volume 37, Number 11
November 2002

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The *Bulletin of the Chicago Herpetological Society* (ISSN 0009-3564) is published monthly by the Chicago Herpetological Society, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago IL 60614. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago IL. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to: Chicago Herpetological Society, Membership Secretary, 2430 N. Cannon Drive, Chicago IL 60614.

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Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 37(11):193, 2002

New Names for Old Turtles

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Recent taxonomic studies on turtle relationships have led to new scientific names for some familiar species in the former "*Clemmys*" group. The reasons for these changes are complex, and many turtle biologists and hobbyists may be reluctant to give up the old familiar names. (I know that I was!)

While many of the recent proposed taxonomic changes in herpetology have been subject to serious debate and disagreement, even among "herp" biologists themselves, it is clear that a new arrangement of species in the "pond, wood, and box turtle" group (the subfamily Emydinae, a part of the large freshwater turtle family, the Emydidae) was long overdue. Taxonomic names must reflect the evolutionary relationships of the animals as closely as possible, based on available data, and occasional changes must be expected as new studies on genetics, morphology (structure), and fossil history are published.

Several published papers over the last few years hinted at the needed turtle name changes (such as Bickham et al., 1996, and Burke et al., 1996) but two papers published in late 2001 and early 2002 finally made concrete proposals for new names (Holman and Fritz, 2001; Feldman and Parham, 2002). While both papers agreed on the need for change, and the general pattern that these changes should take, they did disagree on certain details.

For example, both papers agreed that the wood turtle ("*Clemmys*" *insculpta*) and the bog turtle ("*Clemmys*" *muhlenbergii*) are more closely related to each other than either is to its next closest relative. So they were combined in a new genus, *Glyptemys*, an old name once used to designate the wood turtle by Agassiz in 1857. This change appears to be well supported by several lines of evidence. Feldman and Parham (2002) had actually suggested the name *Calemys*, which Agassiz had applied to the bog turtle, but because the Holman and Fritz (2001) paper came out a few weeks earlier than Feldman and Parham, their choice has priority. Since "*Clemmys*" was first applied to the spotted turtle (by Baur in 1892), this species remains the only member of that genus, as *Clemmys guttata*. Thus, the wood turtle should now be called *Glyptemys insculpta*, and the bog turtle is *Glyptemys muhlenbergii*.

Both pairs of authors also agreed that the Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*), western pond turtle ("*Clemmys*" *marmorata*), and European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) formed a natural ("monophyletic") group separate from other emydine turtles. But they disagreed as to the best name for this group of turtles.

Feldman and Parham proposed combining all three species in the oldest genus, *Emys*. Holman and Fritz were reluctant to combine species with a plastral hinge (the Blanding's and European pond turtles) in the same genus with an unhinged species (western pond turtle), although they suggested that "*Clemmys*" *marmorata* might have secondarily lost its hinge. And *Emydoidea blandingii* has certain specialized features (such as the neck structure) that separate it from *Emys orbicularis*. Thus, they opted to retain *Emydoidea blandingii* and *Emys orbicularis* in separate genera, and placed "*Clemmys*" *marmorata* in its own genus, *Actinemys*. Feldman and Parham note these arguments, but point out that the degree of shell hinging and mobility varies between species in other turtle genera, and propose using the three Holman/Fritz genera as subgenera (which tend to be used mainly in technical papers, and are rarely noted in popular "herp" literature).

This last controversy will not be decided based on the publication dates of the two articles, since it involves interpretation of data and is not just a choice between previously used available names. This question will likely be decided on usage—that is, which and how many herpetologist researchers and authors use which system—and by new published evidence. So, at this point for example, depending on your personal preference, the western pond turtle can be designated either *Emys marmorata* or *Actinemys marmorata*—but it is certainly not "*Clemmys*" *marmorata*!

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Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 37(11):194-195, 2002

*A slightly different version of the article below appeared in Australia in the journal of the Victorian Herpetological Society [*Monitor *9(2), April 1998].*

Extraordinary Feeding Behavior for the Yellow-bellied Seasnake, *Pelamis platurus*

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The genus *Pelamis* is monotypic—it contains but a single species, the yellow-bellied seasnake, *Pelamis platurus*. This species has the greatest distribution of any of the seasnakes of the families Hydrophiidae and Laticaudidae. Due to its habit of venturing into open waters far from land, it is also known (and quite correctly) as the pelagic seasnake.

Its specific range encompasses the east coast of Africa, the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and west to the coasts of Central and South America. Greatest densities seem to occur south of the tropics, but it is absent from the colder waters of the southern oceans. However, Branch (1988) mentions that in southern Africa vagrants are washed south in the Agulhas Current, then stranded on Natal and Cape beaches. Coastal waters along all of the Cape Province shoreline in South Africa are quite chilly. In Australia it is widely distributed along the western, northern, and eastern coastlines.

Seasnakes are notorious for not adjusting well to captive conditions. This is especially true for a "pelagic" dweller such as *Pelamis platurus*, whose lifestyle revolves around ocean currents plus long periods of exposure to ultraviolet rays. Several institutions, and a few private individuals, have recorded minuscule success in the keeping of this and other species. However, more often than not captive confinement only spawns a premature demise.

On 17 August 1967 Steinhart Aquarium, an integral part of the California Academy of Sciences complex in San Francisco, California, received a prime example of the hydrophiid snake *Pelamis platurus*. It was collected in the San Lorenzo Channel off La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico. At that time I was employed by the Academy, in charge of Steinhart Aquarium's extensive collection of live amphibians and reptiles.

The average/maximum size attained by the yellow-bellied seasnake varies greatly according to published information. Branch (1988) sets the maximum size at 100 cm, Gow (1989) suggests a maximum length of about 80 cm, and Cogger (1992) makes the average total length to be 70 cm. Females are said to grow larger than males. Our specimen from the San Lorenzo Channel measured 38 cm in total length, meaning it was better than half grown. Gender was not established.

Knowing in advance that seasnakes in general make poor captives, it was decided right from the start not to place this individual on public display. First, and foremost, a regular feeding schedule had to be established.

Our new arrival was placed into a glass aquarium with a water depth of 12.5 cm. This capacity of salt water, collected directly out of the Pacific Ocean, constituted a volume of approximately 9.4 liters. We (Steinhart Aquarium) pumped our own salt water directly out of the ocean through a pipe that virtually ran the length of Golden Gate Park. This water was then heated according to specific needs, and circulated through a sophisticated filtration system and ultraviolet (UV) exposure to eliminate undesirable bacteria.

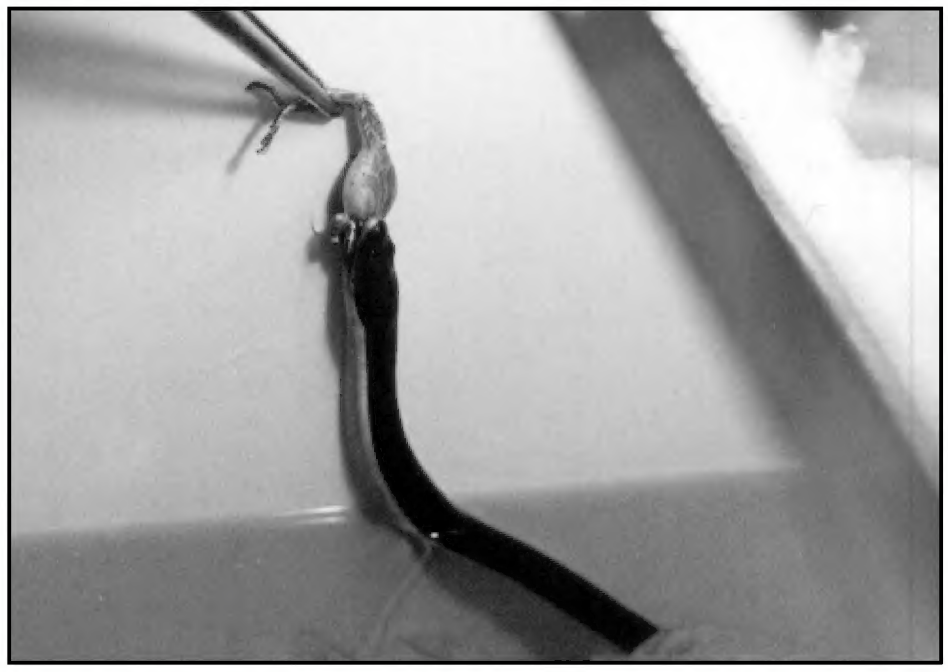
No substrate of any kind was placed into the aquarium, only a multi-leafed plastic plant to serve as an anchoring point for the snake. The aquarium was covered with a stainless steel screen that allowed for ample air circulation and the occasional exposure to UV via a strong sun lamp.

Ambient air temperature varied slightly between 28 and 29°C. Water temperature remained fairly constant at 25.5°C. No fresh water was added to adjust for evaporation. Instead, all of the water was changed periodically after first heating it to the desired temperature.

On 19 August 1967 the first food was offered. This consisted of a small piece of whitebait (fish) measuring 40 × 12 mm in size and held with a long pair of stainless steel forceps. I started out by wiggling the piece of fish well in front of the snake, and when I finally reached its head, it struck sideways with mouth partially agape and seized the dead prey. I quickly released the piece of fish and the snake commenced swallowing immediately. From that day forward our willing captive consumed three to four such pieces of whitebait weekly. The snake preferred seizing its prey by a deliberate sideways motion of its head and often while at least partially swimming "backwards."

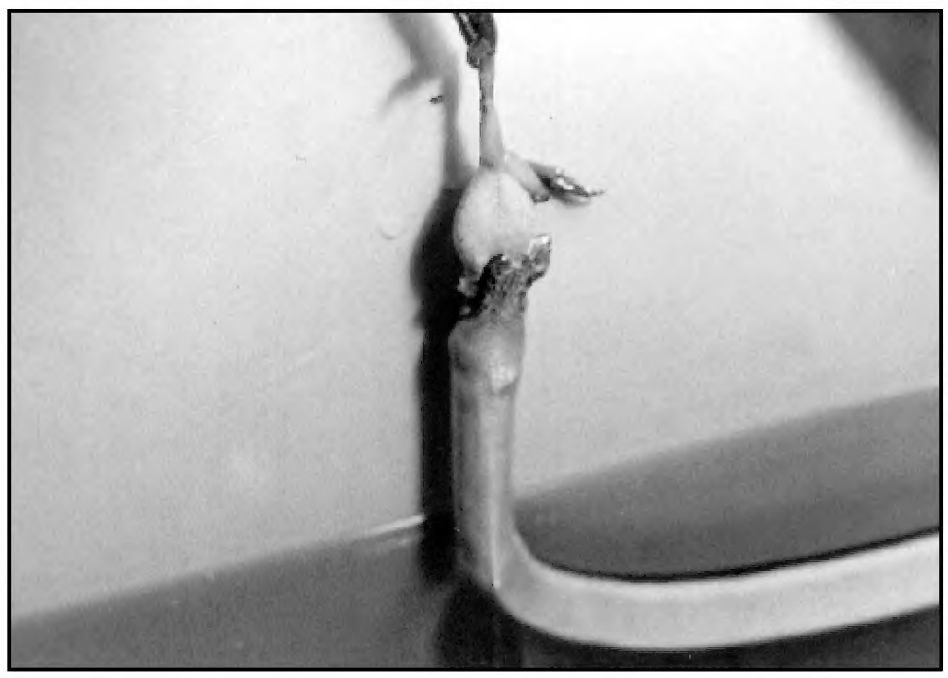
Cogger (1992) writes that *Pelamis* feeds primarily on surface fishes, and Shine (1991) puts it perfectly when he writes: "Unlike other seasnakes which forage mostly in shallow-water crevices, the yellow-bellied seasnake drifts passively across the open ocean. Finding prey is not much of a problem, because small fishes gather under any floating object including seasnakes. The snake's problem is to catch the highly mobile prey that swarm around its tail. Its answer to this difficulty is elegantly simple: the snake simply reverses direction and swims backwards, so that the school of fishes are now clustered around its head rather than its tail. A quick open-mouthed sideways snap, and the elongate jaws close around an unlucky fish. The yellow-bellied seasnake's fangs are positioned well back in its jaws, rather than right at the front, so the sideways swipe usually results in a fang piercing the prey item." Our captive at Steinhart Aquarium behaved in a textbook fashion.

On 1 October 1967 the snake was moved into a public display cage. Up to then it fed on a regular basis and experienced no difficulties with shedding its skin (always in one piece). Its new home consisted of a tank that contained 75 liters of salt water, 2.5 cm of fine sand for a substrate, plus



two plastic plants—one anchored at the bottom, the other free-floating. Air temperature remained a constant 28°C and water temperature 23.5°C.

Being on display did not interfere with the feeding habits of our captive. It would either grasp the piece of fish with a quick sideways swipe of its head, or just swim up to it, seize it head-on, then start swallowing. The swallowing process itself was accomplished by a vigorous chewing motion of those elongated jaws and the prey disappeared within seconds. On several occasions the snake was observed to hold the piece of fish in its jaws, then swim around the tank with it for several minutes before starting to swallow. At this point in time I would describe the feeding habits of our *Pelamis* as "extremely aggressive"!



After two months on display, and don't ask me why, I offered the snake a newly metamorphosed bullfrog, *Rana catesbeiana*, measuring 4 cm in length. The snake stuck its head out of the water, grasped the young bullfrog head-on, "chewed" several times, held the frog in its jaws for about two minutes, then proceeded to swallow. No fish had been offered previously, so this unusual action was not in connection with a feeding frenzy.

Three weeks later I offered an adult green treefrog, *Hyla cinerea*, with the identical results. On 6 March 1969 it took an adult Pacific treefrog, *Hyla regilla*, followed by yet another on 16 March 1969. Each time the snake stuck its head far out of the water (at least 4–6 cm) and secured the amphibian prey head-on. Thereafter the snake's diet consisted only of white-bait, although I'm certain it would have taken additional frogs had they been offered. No live fish were ever introduced. For the period of 17 August 1967 to 16 March 1969, it grew a by a mere 2.5 cm.

I have always advocated that "what a snake preys on in the wild is not necessarily indicative of that which it feeds on in captivity." This *Pelamis* certainly proved my point. Individual serpents, or even isolated colonies of a given species, may be restricted to a singular food supply in the wild, but given the opportunity many are likely to accept other food items when hunger (or availability) dictate a course to the contrary.

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Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 37(11):196-197, 2002

An Addition to the Herpetofauna of the Asbury Woods Greenway, Erie County, Pennsylvania

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In an earlier report on the herpetofauna of the Asbury Woods Greenway, I documented the occurrence of twenty-seven species of amphibians and reptiles, including seven species of snakes (Gray, 2002). Since then, another species has been found to occur at the site, thus raising the species richness count to twenty-eight (Table 1).

The following observation occurred at 0904 hr, on 6 July 2002. Weather was sunny with an air temperature of 20°C in the shade. The site where the observation was made is located above a moderately steep slope, approximately 122 m east of Walnut Creek, at the area commonly referred to as the "power lines." Elevation at the site is ca. 780 ft (238 m).

A gravid female northern red-bellied snake (*Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata*) (Figure 1) was discovered beneath a pile of boards and shingles along an ecotonal area (deciduous forest/old field). The snake had a snout–vent length of 237 mm, and a total length of 300 mm. Weight of the specimen was 10.5 g. The snake was palpated and nine ova were counted; this is slightly below the average litter size of 11.5 given by Hulse et al. (2001) for forty-five Pennsylvania specimens. While being handled the snake displayed the lip flaring behavior that is typical for this species. During this display the upper lips are "flared" and the maxillary teeth are exposed. In addition, the head is usually rubbed against the captor's skin (Hulse et al., 2001). In addition to the Walnut Creek zone, it is probable that this species may also be found in the James Wildlife Preserve, as suitable habitat does exist there. This species is secretive and is seldom found crawling or basking on the surface (Hulse et al., 2001). Habits such as these may partially explain why this species was missed during my prior survey of the area. Although it appears that *S. o. occipitomaculata* is successfully reproducing at the Asbury site, further study is necessary to determine the status of this population.

Figure 1. Female *Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata* found at the Asbury Woods Greenway on 6 July 2002.

On 15 July 2002, I received a report of an eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) that was observed along the Eagle trail (Brian Winslow, pers. com.). This turtle was most likely a released pet and does not represent an individual of a naturally occurring population. *Terrapene* has not been reported from Erie County since the early 1900s and is probably extirpated from the county.

Table 1. Checklist of the species of amphibians and reptiles known to occur at the Asbury Woods Greenway. Consult Gray (2002) for additional information on these species.

Caudata — Salamanders

Ambystoma jeffersonianum — Jefferson Salamander
Ambystoma maculatum — Spotted Salamander
Desmognathus fuscus — Northern Dusky Salamander
Desmognathus ochrophaeus — Allegheny Dusky Salamander
Eurycea bislineata — Northern Two-lined Salamander
Hemidactylium scutatum — Four-toed Salamander
Notophthalmus v. viridescens — Red-spotted Newt
Plethodon cinereus — Eastern Red-backed Salamander
Plethodon glutinosus — Northern Slimy Salamander
Pseudotriton r. ruber — Northern Red Salamander

Anura — Frogs

Bufo a. americanus — Eastern American Toad
Hyla versicolor — Gray Treefrog
Pseudacris c. crucifer — Northern Spring Peeper
Rana catesbeiana — Bullfrog
Rana clamitans melanota — Northern Green Frog
Rana pipiens — Northern Leopard Frog*
Rana palustris — Pickerel frog
Rana sylvatica — Wood Frog

Testudines — Turtles

Chelydra s. serpentina — Eastern Snapping Turtle
Chrysemys picta marginata — Midland Painted Turtle

Serpentes — Snakes

Diadophis punctatus edwardsii — Northern Ring-necked Snake
Elaphe o. obsoleta — Black Ratsnake
Lampropeltis t. triangulum — Eastern Milksnake**
Nerodia s. sipedon — Common Watersnake
Storeria o. occipitomaculata — Northern Red-bellied Snake
Storeria d. dekayi — Northern Brownsnake***
Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis — Northern Ribbonsnake
Thamnophis s. sirtalis — Eastern Gartersnake

* Ostrander (2000).

** Personal communication (1998) with Brian Winslow, Director/ Naturalist, Asbury Woods Nature Center.

*** Personal communication (1998) with Dr. Mike Cambell, Biology Department, Mercyhurst College.

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Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 37(11):197-199, 2002

Book Reviews:

Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, with Comments regarding Confidence in our Understanding by the Committee on Standard English and Scientific Names (Brian I. Crother, Chair) 2000. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, Herpetological Circular No. 29 iv + 82 pp. Paperback. ISBN 0-916984-54-0. $11.00 + $3.00 postage in the USA.

Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians, Turtles, Reptiles and Crocodilians, 5th Edition by Joseph T. Collins and Travis W. Taggart 2002. Center for North American Herpetology, Lawrence, KS. iv + 44 pp. Paperback. ISBN 0-9721937-0-7. No cost (except postage) for single copies.

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> "This is considered the official list [for the three major professional herpetological societies]." (SSAR, 2000; p. 1)
>
> "This edition is the *official* intellectual continuation of the fourth [1997] … edition." (CNAH, 2002; p. 1)

A biologist friend of mine, who is not a herpetologist, recently asked me if there was a publication that provides a current list of standardized scientific and common names for amphibians and reptiles of the United States. She was writing a local herpetofaunal checklist for public use and wanted to get the latest consensus on what species and subspecies are recognized. "Well," I replied, "the short answer to your question is yes, but. . . ." Then I explained that there are *two* such publications (both supposedly "official," as indicated in the above quotations), they are not in 100% agreement with each other, and each has strengths and weaknesses. To make a long story short, we ended up writing our own checklist of scientific and common names for the region of interest, hybridizing information from both publications. So much for standardization!

The publications I refer to are *Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, with Comments Regarding Confidence in our Understanding* (2000), published by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR); and *Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians, Turtles, Reptiles and Crocodilians, 5th Edition* (2002), published by the nonprofit Center for North American Herpetology (CNAH). For brevity, I will refer to them as "the SSAR list" and "the CNAH list," respectively.

Because of some confusion surrounding the two lists, a brief history is in order. Prior to the publication of the SSAR list in 2000, four earlier versions of the standardized names list were published as *Herpetological Circulars* by SSAR under the direction of Joseph Collins (Collins et al., 1978, 1982; Collins 1990, 1997). Following publication of the 1997 list, Collins and SSAR parted company, and a new names committee was appointed by SSAR with Brian Crother as its chairperson. The new committee produced the SSAR's latest (2000) edition of the list, also as a *Herpetological Circular*. Collins, under the aegis of the CNAH, posted the 1997 list on the CNAH Web site (where it has been updated many times over the past five years); the most recent update was published in print form in 2002 with co-author Travis Taggart. The CNAH has, legitimately or not, identified its 2002 publication as the fifth edition of the previous four SSAR lists (all authored or co-authored by Collins). The new (2000) list by SSAR, on the other hand, is considered an all-new publication and is not identified as an update of the four earlier *Herpetological Circulars*.

The SSAR list was compiled by a committee of 14 herpetological systematists, who were assigned to smaller subcommittees devoted to each of the major taxonomic groups (salamanders, frogs and toads, turtles, snakes, lizards and amphisbaenians, and crocodilians). The list is subdivided by major taxonomic group, and scientific names are listed alphabetically within each group (families are not identified). Along with many of the scientific names are notes on why a particular name was used, what references are pertinent, and comments on name changes that may be pending. The list includes all

native and non-native established species found in the United States (including Hawaii) and Canada. A set of guidelines for forming standard English names is also provided. As the Web site for this publication states, "This edition of the list also brings back the committee judgment for both standard English names and recognized scientific names, adding more stability to these names." As indicated by the quotation at the start of this review, the list has been approved by three societies: the SSAR, which publishes *Journal of Herpetology*, *Herpetological Review* and *Herpetological Circulars*, among others; the Herpetologist's League (HL), which publishes *Herpetologica* and *Herpetological Monographs*; and the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH), which publishes *Copeia*.

The CNAH list is similar in general format to the SSAR list but does not include annotations within the list and therefore is the shorter of the two publications (these annotations are on the Web version, however, along with family designations). The first printing of this list had some errors that have been corrected in the more widely distributed second printing. The main section in the CNAH publication considers native North American species, whereas two appendices address non-native established and Hawaiian species separately. There are also comparative tables that show the changes in numbers of recognized genera, species, and subspecies since 1956. As reflected in the title, this list considers turtles and crocodilians as stand-alone classes separate from the Reptilia (which has been restricted to snakes, lizards and amphisbaenians).

I found some aspects of the CNAH list troubling. The publication identifies up to 11 specialists for each major taxonomic group, each of whom was "tendered the opportunity" to comment on the scientific names compiled by authors Collins and Taggart. However, it is not stated in the publication which of these identified specialists actually *did* comment on the list. The CNAH publication cites all the earlier editions of the list, but does not even acknowledge the existence of the 2000 SSAR list, which was published two years earlier. This omission was either an oversight of the authors (which seems doubtful) or a deliberate slight aimed at the SSAR. I can understand that CNAH may not agree with the current SSAR list, but pretending it does not exist suggests to me a lack of objectivity.

Herpetology is a rather small field, so it should come as no surprise that some of the same people are involved in both lists. Taggart is the co-author of the CNAH list and a committee member of the SSAR list. Other researchers appear as both SSAR committee members and as part of the group invited to review the CNAH list. However, as noted above, it is unclear from the CNAH publication which of the specialists contacted actually participated in the CNAH list review, whereas all individuals on the SSAR committee presumably played an active role in producing that publication.

There are some important differences in scientific nomenclature between the lists, mainly involving wide-ranging, polytypic species complexes that have been problematic for many years. (The fact that one list is two years older than the other has also resulted in some differences.) Some examples of problem taxa are *Ambystoma tigrinum* (including *A. mavortium*), *Crotalus viridis* (including *C. oreganus*), *Elaphe guttata* (including *E. emoryi*), *Cnemidophorus tigris* (including *C. marmoratus*), and the various species and subspecies contained under the names *Sceloporus undulatus* and *Elaphe obsoleta*. Some of these differences involve taxa that have been long neglected by systematists and are just now being assessed using state-of-the-art biochemical research methods. Others are groups of organisms that seem not to fit well in *any* Linnaean nomenclature.

As important as a stable list of scientific names may be, it is also important to realize that Linnaean taxonomy is a rather crude device for defining real organisms. Species are not static entities across time or space. Variable hybrid zones can make it difficult to tell where one species (or subspecies) ends and another begins. Furthermore, systematists and taxonomists work with imperfect knowledge of the evolutionary relationships within and among the organisms they study. Many taxonomic decisions come down to the availability of genetic and morphological information, current concepts in species definition, hands-on experience with the live animals, and a dose of personal preference. In short, it is possible for two different taxonomic arrangements to both be "right" because taxonomy is no more than an artificial framework for delimiting entities in nature that are often elusive and lacking clear boundaries.

English (common) names are a different story because they are not usually affected by shifting concepts of species or strict rules of nomenclature. If need be, they can be tinkered with to make them easier to use or more informative. Not being a very consistent user of English names myself, I was a little disappointed that the lists diverge even in this area. Thankfully, many of the differences are fairly inconsequential: "diamond-backed" versus "diamondback"; "garter snake" versus "gartersnake"; "pygmy rattlesnake" versus "pigmy rattlesnake" (although "pigmy salamander" is spelled the same in both!) Some of the English names in the SSAR list will be unfamiliar to most American herpetologists. For example, most of us have long known *Leptotyphlops* species as blind snakes, but the SSAR list uses threadsnakes (apparently the former name is now reserved for *Ramphotyphlops*).

Some other comments about "common" names. The turtle section in the SSAR list omits the word "common" from all English names because of the possibility it might be misinterpreted to imply that a species (or subspecies) of turtle is abundant rather than just widespread. However, this rationale was not applied to other taxa in the SSAR list; the word "common" appears in the English names for *Necturus m. maculosus*, *Uta stansburiana*, *Farancia e. erytrogramma*, *Lampropeltis getula*, and *Thamnophis sirtalis*, among others. Both lists use dunes sagebrush lizard for *Sceloporus arenicolus*. However, sand dune lizard is used by Degenhardt et al. (1996) because it much better reflects the habitat of this species (a valid reason for a name change, in my opinion). The "official" name is a holdover from when *arenicolus* was included under *S. graciosus*, the sagebrush lizard or common sagebrush lizard (depending on which list you consult).

Both lists provide the author and year of the original description for each genus, species, and subspecies. The SSAR

list does a better job of noting when the year on the publication of the description differs from the year that the publication actually appeared in print (for example, *Bufo microscaphus* Cope, 1867 "1866"). I detected a few errors in publication years: the CNAH list has the wrong year for *Trachemys gaigeae* and *Sceloporus arenicolus*, whereas the SSAR list has the wrong year for *Uta stansburiana nevadensis*. Where such discrepancies appear, the publications by Beltz (1995), or Frost (2002) for amphibians, are handy references in the absence of the original descriptions.

Much as speciation events occur in biological organisms, an analogous form of speciation also occurs in human constructs such as languages, cultures, religions, political parties . . . and scientific organizations. The SSAR and CNAH camps have started down separate paths with their competing lists, and where time and evolution takes them no one can say for sure. I suspect future editions of the competing lists will not diverge *too* drastically from each other; after all, they share the same pool of scientific data, a similar taxonomic philosophy, and many of the same participants! But for the time being we have both and can either deal with them or dismiss the whole idea of "official" lists as being rather silly in the first place. (As Carl Sagan once noted, there are no *authorities* in science, only *experts*.) But even if there are no taxonomy police to enforce what names we use, most of us are still stuck between disagreeing experts in our search for a standard.

So which list should you use?

For professional herpetologists, the SSAR list of scientific names will likely be the preferred one because it seems to reflect the viewpoint of most workers in this field and has been sanctioned by the major professional societies in North America. Those who publish in journals of the SSAR, ASIH or HL presumably will follow the SSAR list, except when newly-published research suggests otherwise. Two articles in the September 2002 issue of *Herpetological Review*, for example, use the combinations *Aspidoscelis neomexicana* (for *Cnemidophorus neomexicanus*) and *Crotalus cerberus* (for *C. viridis cerberus* or *C. oreganus cerberus*) which are based on very recent taxonomic changes not reflected in *either* list. As for English names, some of those in the SSAR list strike me as needlessly cumbersome compared to the CNAH list (for example, "southern spot-tailed earless lizard" versus simply "southern earless lizard"). For me, then, the SSAR list is the better for scientific names, but I lean toward the CNAH for many of the English names.

Other herp people may similarly feel no need to pick one list exclusively over the other. Authors of field guides and other popular books on amphibians and reptiles are free to use or reject all or parts of either list. Because such publications often get more exposure and use than technical journal articles, book authors may strongly influence what English names (and, to a lesser extent, scientific names) appear in future editions of these two lists.

My recommendation to those who remain on the fence is to get both lists and spend some time browsing them. In many instances, you will find there is little or no disagreement between names. Where there is disagreement, consult the Web sites for both to see if there is new information or corrections that may be pertinent to the taxa you are working with. Then go with the name that you prefer or that seems to make the most sense based on your personal experience. Hopefully most of the differences will shake out over time and future editions of both lists will converge toward uniformity. We might someday even get past the "need" for two such lists. However, given human nature, I won't hold my breath.

The SSAR list is available on the Web at < http://www.herplit.com/SSAR/circulars/HC29/Crother.html> . The Web site includes online and PDF versions of the book, plus a list of corrections to the published edition. At present, there is no provision for posting taxonomic updates. The Web version of the CNAH list is at < http://www.naherpetology.org/> and includes notes on controversial taxa, photographs of many species, and frequent updates not reflected in the printed version. Information for ordering printed versions of either list are available on these Web sites.

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HerPET-POURRI

by Ellin Beltz

Were they lightheaded?

"Austrian police ordered to check some faulty traffic lights discovered it was being occupied by a family of snakes. Officers went to see if they could repair the lights at a busy junction in Graz. But instead of a broken bulb they discovered the fault was a nest of four Aesculapian snakes. The nonvenomous reptiles were removed and released at the nearby Mur river." [London, UK Press Association, September 29, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

Unemployed

"An animal control worker was fired for allegedly feeding a litter of live, weeks-old puppies to a large snake . . . [which was] confiscated during a police raid . . . [and] placed in a sanctuary. The female animal control worker . . . was fired." [*Grand Rapids Press*, Michigan, September 24, 2002, from new contributor Ron Winfrey]

Oldest amphibian

A fossil previously mislabeled as a fish and stored in a museum drawer has been found to be the earliest known animal to walk on land. It is described as "a salamanderlike creature that marked a previously unknown stage in the evolution of fish into the ancestors of all vertebrates alive today . . . between 348 million and 344 million years ago in what is now Scotland. . . . A yard long (its tail accounting for about a third of its length), it probably split its time between water and land where it walked on four feet," according to one of the researchers. [Eureka, CA *Times-Standard*, October 14, 2002, from K. S. Mierzwa]

Think twice about your next headache

Brown tree snakes on Guam have reached a density as high as 26,000 per square mile and have been trapped, studied and written about for years. Now wildlife officials have obtained federal permission to kill brown tree snakes by baiting mice with acetaminophen and stuffing them in snake-sized tubes so only the snakes can eat them. The snakes probably stowed away on military transport at the end of WWII; they later ate their way through Guam's fauna including one dozen endemic species of birds. [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 30, 2002, from Ms. G. E. Chow]

Mucking about in Jackson Park

The *Chicago Tribune* reports that several of my old friends in Chicago spent a considerable period of time crawling around in Chicago Park District lagoons in Jackson Park. They did not, however, find any of the Blanding's turtles reported by a bird watcher recently. They did find about a half-dozen painted turtles, several species of rare native shellfish and native fish that were hunkered down in the mud which was to be dredged out to make way for a better lagoon. [October 8, 2002, from Ray Boldt]

The beginning of the end

"Silent Invasion" by the National Wildlife Refuge Association calls for a three-part strategy to combat invasive species—educating and mobilizing volunteers, deploying rapid response strike teams and implementing the strategic management plan of the National Invasive Species Council, after finding that non-natives have "invaded more than 100 million acres of land nationwide, and almost eight million of those acres are in wildlife refuges, areas created to protect the most important examples of biological diversity." [*GreenLines*, October 31, 2002, #1737]

Suicide by snake

Animals taken from the home of an El Paso, Texas, man who officials believe used the bite of a venomous snake to commit suicide include an American alligator (endangered), two albino cobras, a boa constrictor, two rattlesnakes, some lizards, turtles, tarantulas, rabbits, goldfish and dogs. The cobras were euthanized, the endangered and native animals placed in proper care and the rest of the animals were taken by friends of the man who died. [KVIA-7, El Paso, September 25, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

Suburban rumors laid to rest

• Forget what you may have read or heard, no rattlesnake or rattlesnakes were released near Wausau, Wisconsin. "`There are no rattlesnakes this far north. Never have been, never will be,' said [a] DNR wildlife biologist who works out of the agency's Rib Mountain office. [He] surmised that the genesis of the timber rattler rumor was a U.S. Fish and Wildlife project that introduced 15 massasauga rattlesnakes to the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in fall 1999. The project was designed to research the snakes' habits and study the possibility of introducing them to the wilds there. Each was fitted with a radio transmitter, and . . . the surviving snakes were removed from the area after the study concluded. [Marshfield, Wisconsin *News Herald*, August 27, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

• The *Chicago Tribune* reports that "a South Elgin man was heartbroken . . . after police carted off his beloved 5-foot caiman . . . and [a] desert lynx . . . and charged him with possessing dangerous animals." The cat was reportedly seen loose in the neighborhood, which prompted police to seek its home. Both animals have been relocated to approved sites within the state. [August 31, 2002, from Ray Boldt]

Still no comet, just toads

Part of a letter received from Raymond Hoser of Melbourne, Australia, read: "Been speaking to a bloke in Barcaldine in Queensland tonight and he told me that last year cane toads made their debut in that town. The result has been an apparent mass-extinction of monitor lizards and a sharp drop in most other things herpetological. The man (not a herpetologist) reckons that places to the north of there such as Mt. Isa will also eventually go under in terms of toads due to their greater size river systems and higher rainfall. It seems that the damage caused by toads in Queensland is far from over and that these stinking things may end up going via the channel country

to South Australia which is worse than I predicted in the 1980s." September 24, 2002

Boggling numbers

In 2001–2002 "18,449 deer [were] killed on the road in West Virginia alone. Would anyone like to estimate the number of turtles, snakes, frogs, in their state, in this country? Editor" [*Dominion Post Newspaper*, West Virginia, September 29, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

Amphibians standardized

Herp Digest reports: CITES Nomenclature Committee To Use *Amphibian Species of the World* by Darryl R. Frost <http://www.cites.org/eng/notifs/2002/058.shtml>. Notifications to the Parties, Standard reference for amphibians. . . . At its meeting of 8 April 2002 (San Jose, Costa Rica), the Nomenclature Committee accepted the printout of *Amphibian Species of the World* by D. R. Frost as the standard reference for amphibians, valid as from the date of distribution of this Notification to the Parties. The pertinent pages regarding CITES-listed species of amphibians, the Amphibian Species Checklist, are provided in annex. It should be noted that the layout of the website where the on-line version of *Amphibian Species of the World* can be found <http://research.amnh.org/herpetology/amphibia> looks different from the printed version adopted by the Nomenclature Committee. The content is however identical. [October 4, 2002, from Allen Salzberg]

More amphibian news

• Researchers discovered 120 new frog species in a 750-km^2 segment of remaining Sri Lankan rain forest. Most of the new species survive by laying eggs which develop directly on land. Frogs hatch as miniature adults and have no tadpole phase. This may have helped them survive the loss of 95 percent of Sri Lanka's original rain forest cover. The authors suggest that other wonderful finds of small and slimy await future researchers in tropical Asia. [*Science*, October 11, 2002, from Eloise Beltz-Decker]

• "A popular childhood pastime could be putting New Zealand's native wild frogs at risk. Scientists say catching frogs and tadpoles then letting them go somewhere else means diseases spread, killing off rare populations. Chytrid fungus was found in New Zealand in 1999 and since then has killed thousands of native and introduced amphibians. The Department of Conservation has launched frog week to help promote their conservation and reverse declining numbers. The department says the key is to return tadpoles or frogs to the place where they were caught. And DOC wants the public to report any sightings of sick or dead frogs. Native frogs do not croak, have very big eyes and do not produce swimming tadpoles—instead the babies develop inside eggs before hatching as small frogs with tails. The experts say that makes them some of the most fascinating amphibians in the world. [*Nzoom*, New Zealand, September 30, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

• Hundreds of Welsh newts will be moved into new ponds because a hi-tech business park had to be developed on the land where their old ponds used to be. "Twelve new ponds have been created for the newts and four miles of newt fencing has been erected. The reptiles are now being carefully moved in a series of operations in the early hours of the day, when they tend to surface. So far, the WDA has relocated nearly 300 newts. The site will feature green corridors and wedges for all sorts of wildlife, and eight hectares of land will be left undeveloped. The site will also include newt-friendly drainage systems. [Cardiff, UK *Western Mail,* September 30, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

Sponsored by Speedo?

Baby loggerhead sea turtles navigate by detecting slight differences in Earth's magnetic field. They use this information to stay in the Atlantic gyre, a clockwise rotating current of warm water (called "the Gulf Stream" along the U.S. east coast). The study used hatchlings in a tank surrounded by coils capable of creating precisely controlled magnetic fields. Tiny bathing suits attached to harnesses were placed on 70 turtle hatchlings. Where and how they swam was recorded while the fields were changing. As researchers mimicked the magnetic field of different places on earth, the hatchlings kept pointing in a direction which would have kept them squarely in the Atlantic gyre at that point. [*Washington Times*, October 12, 2001, from Ray Boldt]

A growing trend (do pardon the pun)

• The first alligator ever found in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, was apparently an illegal captive. Found wandering a suburban neighborhood, "Wally" was taken into custody by the Pennsylvania Fish and Wildlife Agency which refused to say what they would do with it. [WPVI, October 6, and *Herp Digest*, October 20, 2002, from Allen Salzberg]

• A 15-foot-long Burmese python described as as "wide as a soccer ball" was spotted in Nottinghamshire, England, woods near the Lincolnshire border. A RSPCA inspector said they continue to look for the nonvenomous constrictor which they suspect is living on small rodents or other mammals in the woods. They speculate the snake's owner abandoned it as "too big." [BBC, October 2, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

• More snakes, lizards and frogs are being kept as pets than ever before according to the Associated Press which added that many people see them as a once a week feed and clean. The North American Reptile Breeders Conference and Show had displays by 150 dealers and drew 6,000 people to the two-day event in Tinley Park. [*South Bend Tribune*, September 9, 2002, from Garrett Kazmierski and *Chicago Tribune*, October 1 and 13, 2002, from Ray Boldt]

I can't wait for the shoes

Gecko setae (hairlike structures on the bottoms of their feet) have yielded the secret of how a gecko stays stuck, yet can release at will. Each seta ends in bacteria-sized cells. The attraction between these tiny cells and solids is by means of van der Waals' forces—the weakest known form of atomic bonding. A single gecko seta can lift an ant; if all the setae on a single gecko were fully engaged, they could lift 280 pounds. Researchers are working on commercial applications like

adhesives and mountaineering shoes. [*Chicago Tribune*, September 2, 2002, from Ray Boldt]

Creative writing

The Florida News Journal (October 6, 2002) issued a plea to visitors: Please don't take our carnivorous reptiles. Writer Mark Lane continued: "Only last year, two tourists were arrested after alligator napping one of the resident reptiles and letting it loose in a motel pool. Folks, this is a bad idea. Bad for the alligator. Bad for the people involved in the transportation. Bad for the pool-boy. Next time someone says to you: `Hey, let's go get a 'gator and set it loose in the pool!' just say `no.' Consider this a public service announcement. Friends don't let friends bring alligators back to their motel. The persistence of senseless 'gator-related tourist crime illustrates something most observers have long suspected about Florida tourism. People don't come here despite the weird stories they've heard about dangerous wildlife and Nature Run Amok. People come here because of the weird stories they've heard about dangerous wildlife and Nature Run Amok. Those shark stories everyone worries about? Don't worry. They sell T-shirts. They sell the area. Alligator-eats-poodle stories? Too bad for Fluffy, but in the aggregate, good for the local economy."

More silly tourism tales

• Creative smuggling seems to be one of the latest worldwide stories. In July, a 17-year-old girl off the plane from Dubai, UAE, was questioned when officials saw that what at first glance was a lizard-patterned headscarf was really an endangered chameleon. [*News of the Weird*, September 27, 2002, from Ray Boldt]

• In February, Glasgow, Scotland, airport customs officials confiscated a woman's snakeskin belt when they realized it was an exotic and endangered harmless snake the lass had wrapped around her waist. [*News of the Weird*, July 12, 2002, from Ray Boldt]

• "A tourist who captured a live alligator at a miniature golf course has been charged with animal poaching and petty theft." [*Orlando Sentinel*, October 3, 2002, from Bill Burnett]

"I-DO" "I-DO"

Farmers in "Karumbapalayam near Thondamuthur here solemnized marriage between two frogs. . . . The bridegroom sitting in a toy car and the bride in a decorated toy cart, were brought in a procession to the marriage hall, accompanied by usual percussions. . . . The couple's `honeymoon' was . . . in a nearby well," reports *Outlook India* (New Delhi, October 4, 2002). Rains have failed the past two seasons and like they did nearly 20 years ago; villagers are trying anything to get the monsoon to come. [from Wes von Papineäu]

An interesting request

"I am from the Pueblo of Laguna, which is one of the 19 Pueblo tribes in New Mexico. Along with the Pueblos of Acoma, Santa Ana, Zia, Cochiti, Santo Domingo and San Felipe we speak the Keres dialect. Our ceremonies involve ceremonial dances and prayer that are focused on the land, people, and all life. As an agrarian society, rain and the prayer for rain and moisture is a big part of our ceremonial cycle. Because the turtle is often found near or in water, they represent a connection to the moisture and rain spirits. The turtle is looked to for its power to communicate with the rain spirits and is respected for this reason. This is why the turtle is used in our religious ceremonies. We are in need of intact box turtle shells with both plastron and scutes still attached to the carapace. Richard Luarkie, <rbluarkie@yahoo.com> Richard Luarkie, P.O. Box 468, Casa Blanca, NM 87007." [from Allen Salzberg]

Have you been tested?

Blood given by an apparently asymptomatic boa owner caused salmonella infections when it was given as transfusions to sick patients. The whole article is in the September 3, 2002, *New England Journal of Medicine* and suggests that the U.S. blood supply system is still transmitting disease despite the assurances of blood providers that the system is "safe." 1.4 million cases of salmonella infections occur annually in the United States. The blood donor passed all the standard questions and was considered "healthy" by the blood collecting agency. [Toronto, Ontario *Globe and Mail*, September 3, 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

Homing snakes

An attempt to move the sea kraits living on one island in Fiji to another failed because the relocated sea snakes kept returning to their original home [*Conservation Biology*, October, 2002, from K. S. Mierzwa] "The Laticaudidae family of sea snakes can be found around islands and reefs in the Pacific Ocean and are not endangered. However, in some areas, snakes such as the yellow-lipped sea krait, *Laticauda colubrina*, have been heavily exploited by the international leather industry. Overharvesting has caused local extinctions on some Japanese and Filipino islands. . . . Laticaudid sea snakes are not true sea snakes. Though they forage in the ocean for moray and conger eels, they return to shore to digest prey, shed skins, mate, and lay eggs. True sea snakes, species in the family Hydrophiidae, never go ashore, and give birth to live young out at sea. Both groups of amphibious reptiles must return to the ocean's surface to breathe air. Scientists believe that historically the groups invaded the ocean separately, evolving adaptations to marine life independently," reports *National Geographic* [October 2002, from Wes von Papineäu]

Lost and found in the desert

A Nile crocodile intended for the Windhoek Show Snake Park, which escaped while being trucked to Windhoek [Namibia] was spotted by a retired conservationist . . . who "thought he had seen it all, but when he came across a crocodile on the side of the national road near Grunau on Saturday, he was certain he'd lost his marbles," according to *The Namibian* (October 1, 2002). He and his wife "drove past what looked like a torn tire at the roadside. `I told her it looked like a crocodile and turned around to go back. She told me I was crazy. And sure enough there it was.' For his trouble [he] received the N$1,000 reward that was offered when the reptile

went missing. . . . The two-and-a-half-meter Nile croc is still recovering from the ordeal and can be seen resting under a thorn bush in the Snake Park." [from Wes von Papineäu]

Another snake in paradise
A resident of Hauula prised a 2-foot California kingsnake out of a hole in a stone wall of Masa's Market. Officials picked it up and took it to a detention area. They showed off their latest capture with a ball python which was willingly turned in under the state's amnesty program. Call the pest hotline at 586-7378 if you see snakes on the islands. [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, August 20, 2002, from Ms. G. E. Chow]

Swap meet busted
The northwest suburban Chicago *Daily Herald* reported that: "A yearlong investigation into illegal reptile trading ended in Streamwood this weekend, when 20 state and federal law enforcement agents descended upon a ` reptile swap' Sunday morning at . . . [a] farm on Schaumburg Road. Fourteen of the reptile vendors at the show were arrested, said [an] Illinois Conservation Police Investigator . . . , and at least three more arrests are pending. In addition, a total of 37 misdemeanor citations were issued. Charges ranged from the possession of venomous snakes to the sale of baby turtles, banned by the Food and Drug Administration because they are known carriers of the salmonella bacteria." The show has been running for 12 years and is an institution of sorts for some reptile collectors. There were nearly 50 vendors the day of the raid. The Herald continues: "A December 2001 arrest in Will County in which 11 venomous snakes were seized—including the rare and highly poisonous monocled albino cobra—were traced back to the Streamwood swap. . . . Despite the raid Sunday, [the] shows have not been shut down." The owner of the swap and farm "expressed shock and dismay at what he felt was the confrontational way in which the raid was handled. ` They all had guns and flak jackets, like they were ready for a shoot-out. . . . They came in and made an announcement on our speaker system. They said, "We have armed officers at every entrance of this exhibit." Basically, people started wondering if it was a joke. But a lot of kids were frightened. . . .' [Authorities] said that the number of agents was partially a reflection of the number of agencies involved in the raid—which included not just the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, but also the Food and Drug Administration, the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." Bags and boxes were searched as people were asked to leave the swap, and cars in the parking area outside were also examined. An illegal timber rattlesnake was found under the table of a 21-year-old Illinois resident. [September 17, 2002, from Jim Hoffman]

Glad to be alive
The director of Kanapaha Botanical Gardens in Gainesville, Florida, lost his right forearm to an 11-foot, 400-pound alligator while he was scooping thin mats of algae from one of the water gardens with a metal net. Don Goodman, 58, even has a sense of humor, suggesting that perhaps he should get a prosthetic arm with a "weed-eater at the end." The gator was known to live in the pond and had been given the name of "MoJo" by the staff. His severed arm was recovered from the gator's stomach, but was too badly damaged to reattach. Mr. Goodman said, "I was just happy to be alive." [September 25, 2002: Leesburg, Florida *Daily Commercial*, from Bill Burnett, and *Chicago Tribune*, from Ray Boldt—October 10, 2002: The *Orlando Sentinel*, from Bill Burnett; *The Miami Herald*, from Alan Rigerman] Cards and letters offering encouragement can be sent to Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, 4700 SW 58th Drive, Gainesville, Florida 32608. [Address courtesy of C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr., and Raymond Novotny]

Thanks to everyone who contributed this month but now, both the electronic and real file folders are just about empty except for my copies of *MOKO* (the journal of the New Zealand Herp Society) which will be extensively quoted next month in the absence of any new material from CHS members! Send whole pages of papers and magazines with the date/publication slug and your name on each page to: Ellin Beltz, POB 934, Ferndale, CA 95536. Letters and electronic text can be sent to my email <ebeltz@ebeltz.net>.

Bull. Chicago Herp. Soc. 37(11):204-206, 2002

Herpetology 2002

In this column the editorial staff presents short abstracts of herpetological articles we have found of interest. This is not an attempt to summarize all of the research papers being published; it is an attempt to increase the reader's awareness of what herpetologists have been doing and publishing. The editor assumes full responsibility for any errors or misleading statements.

A NEW CUBAN SNAKE

S. B. Hedges and O. H. Garrido [2002, J. Herpetology 36(2): 157-161] describe *Tropidophis hendersoni*, a new species from the northern coast of eastern Cuba, in the province of Holguin. It is a small, spotted species previously confused with *Tropidophis haetianus* of Hispaniola. It differs from that species in being smaller, and in scalation and coloration. It is tentatively placed in the *maculatus* species group. The species is named in honor of Robert W. Henderson, Curator of Amphibians and Reptiles, Milwaukee Public Museum, for his many valued contributions to West Indian herpetology.

FENCE LIZARD NEST-SITE SELECTION

D. A. Warner and R. M. Andrews [2002, Herpetologica 58(4):399-407] point out that development and survival of reptilian embryos are affected by the temperature and moisture within the nest. Moreover, thermal and hydric conditions during incubation also affect phenotypes of hatchlings. Thus, females should select nest sites that enhance hatching success and produce hatchlings with phenotypes fit for the local environment. In the laboratory, gravid female fence lizards (*Sceloporus undulatus*) were housed in a large enclosure that provided suitable nesting substrate. Gradients of temperature and moisture within the substrate were established to provide a wide range of conditions from which females could choose. Fifteen (65%) females selected nest conditions within the moisture and temperature range that results in successful embryonic development. Two females (9%) nested in extremely dry conditions, and six females (26%) oviposited on the substrate surface. Females that nested in the field selected nest sites with similar conditions as females that nested in the laboratory. In general, this study provides support for the idea that females choose nest sites with thermal and hydric conditions that are associated with positive hatching success.

EXPLOITED NILE MONITOR POPULATIONS

V. de Buffrénil and G. Hémery [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3): 419-426] studied body size, age, and growth in samples of Nile monitor lizards from variably exploited populations. One sample originated from the central Niger delta, in Mali, and the other two from Lake Chad. Snout–vent length, mean age and longevity were reduced in the most exploited animals. These exhibited a characteristic pattern of somatic growth: size increased up to an age of 30 months and then dropped steeply to a negligible level after 54 months. Conversely, in the less exploited populations, initial growth was slower but remained at a sustained level within the limits of individual longevity. With reference to available data on sexual maturation and reproductive output in harvested *Varanus niloticus*, these results suggest that rapid growth and early sexual maturity both contribute to a demographic accommodation in exploited monitor populations.

AERIAL LOCOMOTION IN A "FLYING" GECKO

B. A. Young et al. [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3):412-418] quantified the flight trajectories of *Ptychozoon kuhli* dropped from heights of 300 and 825 cm and the effects of removing the cutaneous flaps and binding the feet. Analyses suggested there is a threshold speed of approximately 650 cm/sec below which the lift generated does not significantly retard acceleration of the animal or permit shallow glide angles. Removal of cutaneous flaps from specimens gliding at airspeeds below 650 cm/sec had no effect on the flight; above 650 cm/sec the presence of the cutaneous flaps significantly slowed the specimen and produced shallower glide angles. Binding of the feet eliminated all maneuverability and led to a significant increase in airspeed and decrease in glide angle. The authors propose that the webbed feet of *Ptychozoon* play a key function in gliding and that aerial locomotion in this taxon may be more similar to "flying" treefrogs than to other reptilian gliders.

BLUE-TONGUED SKINK REPRODUCTION

A. Edwards et al. [2002, Herpetologica 58(4):407-414] examined reproductive frequency in wild-caught and captive females of the blotched blue-tongued skink, *Tiliqua nigrolutea*, over five consecutive reproductive seasons. Reproductive frequency (0.38 ± 0.035) was clearly different from an annual pattern (1.0) in which all females reproduce every year. Individual females did not reproduce every year, but "skipped" seasons were staggered such that a proportion of the population produced a clutch each season. The authors attribute skipped reproductive opportunities to a combination of a long gestation, high relative clutch mass (0.43 ± 0.034), parturition late in the active season, a cessation of feeding in the latter stages of gestation, and low autumn temperatures.

PREY TRAILING IN BROWN TREESNAKES

C. P. Stark et al. [2002, J. Herpetology 36(1):57-62] point out that because of the deleterious effects of predation by nonnative brown treesnakes (*Boiga irregularis*) on native vertebrates on the island of Guam, efforts have been focused on developing effective means of controlling *B. irregularis* and preventing its spread to neighboring islands. Past laboratory attempts to evaluate potential baits for trapping *B. irregularis* have often not agreed with field results. The authors present a new laboratory situation for studying effects of various baits on prey finding ability of *B. irregularis* that uses trailing latencies as a measure of bait efficacy. Results show that *B. irregularis* will follow trails made by rodent blood, whole rodent carcasses, and synthetic bait compounds. However, snakes followed trails made by rodent carcasses and blood at a significantly faster rate than those made by synthetic bait compounds. Further, the presence of a visual distracter cue significantly increased trailing latencies. Implications of these results for trapping efforts are discussed.

CANOE SURVEYS FOR FROGS

R. E. Jung et al. [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3):390-397] note that surveys for amphibians along large rivers pose monitoring and sampling problems. They used canoes at night to spotlight and listen for anurans along four stretches of the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park, Texas, in 1998 and 1999. They explored temporal and spatial variation in amphibian counts and species richness and assessed relationships between amphibian counts and environmental variables, as well as amphibian-habitat associations along the banks of the Rio Grande. Seven anuran species were documented, but Rio Grande leopard frogs (*Rana berlandieri*) accounted for 96% of the visual counts. Chorus surveys along the river detected similar or fewer numbers of species, but orders of magnitude fewer individuals compared to visual surveys. The number of species varied on average by 37% across monthly and nightly surveys. Similar average coefficients of variation were found in counts of Rio Grande leopard frogs on monthly and nightly bases (CVs = 42–44%), suggesting that canoe surveys are a fairly precise technique for counts of this species. Numbers of Rio Grande leopard frogs observed were influenced by river gage levels and air and water temperatures, suggesting that surveys should be conducted under certain environmental conditions to maximize counts and maintain consistency. Significant differences were found in species richness and bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) counts among the four river stretches. Four rare anuran species were found along certain stretches but not others, which could represent either sampling error or unmeasured environmental or habitat differences among the river stretches. The surveys revealed a greater association of Rio Grande leopard frogs with mud banks compared to rock or cliff (canyon) areas and with seepwillow and open areas compared to giant reed and other vegetation types. Canoe surveys appear to be a useful survey technique for anurans along the Rio Grande and may work for other large river systems as well.

SCAVENGING BY SNAKES

T. L. DeVault and A. R. Krochmal [2002, Herpetologica 58(4):429-436] report that although it is widely known that most species of snakes readily accept carrion in captivity, the notion of scavenging by wild snakes historically has been rejected or ignored. The authors review the literature describing instances of scavenging by snakes and consider the implications of carrion use on their ecology. Thirty-nine published accounts yielded 50 observations of scavenging by snakes (43 from field observations and seven from laboratory studies). Thirty-five species from five families were represented, but pitvipers and piscivorous snakes were represented more frequently than other groups. Scavenged material varied widely and included rodents, birds, fish, frogs, and snakes. Olfaction appears to be the overriding sensory modality used for carrion detection. Some species may use scavenging as a deliberate feeding strategy that supplements their regular modes of prey acquisition. Additional knowledge of the scavenging behavior of snakes should provide new insights into the fundamentals of the ecology of snakes.

BURROW USE AND DEFENSE BY JUVENILE AMBYSTOMIDS

S. D. Smyers et al. [2002, Herpetologica 58(4):422-429] conducted two laboratory experiments with juveniles of *Ambystoma opacum* and *A. maculatum* to test for intra- and interspecific competition for burrows. Experiment 1 examined how the behavior of an intruder (i.e., an individual that enters an occupied burrow) was influenced by the presence of a resident salamander that had been placed in the test chamber 5 d earlier. Experiment 2 investigated patterns of cohabitation when salamanders were introduced singly, as conspecific pairs, or as heterospecific pairs during a 7-d test period. The results of these experiments indicate that (1) when maintained alone, juvenile *A. opacum* were observed more frequently outside of the burrow than were juvenile *A. maculatum*; (2) *A. maculatum* were more likely to enter unoccupied burrows compared to burrows that were occupied by conspecific or heterospecific salamanders; (3) *A. maculatum* intruders were bitten more frequently by resident *A. opacum* than by resident *A. maculatum*; (4) when two individual salamanders shared a burrow, *A. maculatum* were more likely to leave a cohabited burrow whereas use of shared burrows by *A. opacum* was not influenced by the presence of another salamander in the burrow. These experiments demonstrate that juvenile *A. opacum* may defend burrow space by excluding heterospecific salamanders. However, the results also indicate that species-specific behavioral differences may influence patterns of burrow use, which may reduce the importance of agonistic interactions under natural conditions.

SPINY SOFTSHELL ECOLOGY

P. Galois et al. [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3):402-411] studied movement patterns, activity, and home range of the eastern spiny softshell turtle (*Apalone spinifera*) in northern Lake Champlain (Quebec, Canada; Vermont) from 1996 to 1999. This turtle population is at the northern limit of its range and considered threatened. Of the 30 individuals captured and marked, 15 females and eight males were equipped with radiotransmitters and monitored from two weeks to 29 months. Mean annual home range size for females (32.06 km^2, N = 11) was significantly larger than for males (2.75 km^2, $N = 4$). Home ranges generally consisted of a spring–summer concentration area (0.90 km^2) and a fall–winter concentration area (1.80 km^2), plus the area traversed between these concentration areas. In general, movements did not vary significantly from May to September, but turtles were less active after mid-September. Three hibernacula and three nesting sites were identified. Seventy-five percent of the radio-tracked individuals were concentrated in a small area surrounding one hibernaculum from September to April. The authors hypothesize that habitat fragmentation, both natural and resulting from human activities, was in part responsible for the large home range and long movements observed. Results indicate that, to conserve this spiny softshell turtle population, the seasonal concentration areas need strict protection, although a lakewide approach promoting the preservation of natural habitats is also necessary.

EASTERN BROWNSNAKE ACTIVITY

P. B. Whitaker and R. Shine [2002, Herpetologica 58(4): 436-452] note that eastern brownsnakes (*Pseudonaja textilis*) from southeastern Australia are alert, well camouflaged, secretive, fast moving and dangerously venomous, and they spend much of the time hidden in burrows. Thus, direct observation of this species is difficult. However, distinctive patterns in environmental thermal heterogeneity, coupled with knowledge of the thermal preferenda of the snakes, made it possible to infer their location and activity based on remotely monitored body temperatures (obtained from surgically implanted radio transmitters). Data on 40 radiotracked snakes were used to evaluate patterns of thermoregulation, activity and habitat use. Captive snakes actively selected body temperatures around 31°C; free-ranging snakes displayed similar body temperatures while active. Data on temperatures of the soil, operative models, and shaded air, allowed identification of the activity schedules of the snakes (especially, times of emergence from and retreat into burrows). The highest incidences of above-ground activity came in late spring and late summer. Thermal profiles suggest that inactive snakes in burrows spent most of their time at approximately 20 cm depth, but they moved to shallower depths at some times (e.g., during summer, when they sometimes spent all night above ground) and deeper at other times (e.g., ≥40 cm in winter). Reproductive females stayed with their eggs after oviposition in midsummer, ~30 cm underground. Burrow temperatures were frequently high, so that the snakes did not need to emerge to elevate body temperature. Overall, the telemetered snakes spent an average of 56% of active-season days, 64% of all days, and 93% of all hours below ground. Hence, this species largely depends on in-ground temperature for thermal energy exchange.

MASSASAUGA DIETS

A. T. Holycross and S. P. Mackessy [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3):454-464] describe the diet of the desert massasauga, *Sistrurus catenatus edwardsii*, in Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico using fecal remains and gut contents obtained from field encounters and museum specimens. From these, 165 prey were identified, including 97 (58.8%) lizards, 51 (30.9%) mammals, 15 (9.1%) centipedes *(Scolopendra* sp.), one (0.6%) anuran, and one (0.6%) snake. Analyses of geographic, sexual and ontogenetic variation within *S. c. edwardsii* suggest diet is homogeneous among populations and between the sexes but that juveniles consume significantly more lizards and fewer mammals than adults. The authors assess rangewide variation in diet of *Sistrurus catenatus* using their data from Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico (*S. c. edwardsii*) and previously published studies of populations in Wisconsin (*Sistrurus catenatus catenatus*), Michigan (*S. c. catenatus*), Missouri (*Sistrurus catenatus tergeminus*) and Texas (*S. c. tergeminus*), as well as new data from Texas (*S. c. tergeminus*). Significant geographic variation in diet parallels ecological and behavioral variation across the range of *S. catenatus*. *Sistrurus c. edwardsii* are xeric grassland-adapted snakes dependent on lizard and centipede prey, whereas both eastern subspecies favor more mesic environs and prey primarily on small mammals with juveniles occasionally feeding on snakes or lizards.

ESTIMATING LIZARD HOME RANGES

P. A. Stone and T. A. Baird [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3):427-436] note that in 1982 B. Rose pointed out that home-range area could easily be underestimated unless sufficient numbers of sightings were obtained for each individual, and recommended a population-specific test to determine the minimum sample size at which home-range area can be accurately measured. This recommendation has been generally ignored. The authors explore how sample size affects interpretation of space use data in male lava lizards, *Microlophus albemarlensis*, and male eastern collared lizards *Crotaphytus collaris*. Using the criteria established by Rose, the minimum sample sizes for collared lizards and lava lizards were 45 and 84 sightings, respectively. These are much larger samples than the authors anticipated and reinforce the need for empirical determination of minimum sample size. The data suggest that lizard movement rate is a better predictor of minimum sample size than home-range area. Collared lizard home ranges were over 10 times larger than lava lizard home ranges, yet the higher movement rates of collared lizards resulted in a minimum sample size that was about one-half that of lava lizards. Restricting data collection to any one-quarter of the total study period would have markedly underestimated home-range area and home-range overlap in both species. Every lizard of both species had a core area within its home range, suggesting the absence of major temporal shifts during the study. On average, lava lizard core areas occupied 21.7 ± 2.8% of total home-range area, yet core areas included 78.8 ± 3.1% of all lizard sightings. Collared lizard core areas averaged 25.4 ± 2.4%, with a lower percentage of collared lizard sightings occurring within core areas (66.3 ± 3.0%). There was only one incidence of core overlap in either species. Lava lizards may be defending core areas but in an unusual manner, what amounts to "sit-and-wait territoriality." This unusual mode of space use would not be detectable from a smaller number of sightings per individual.

GREEN SEA TURTLE DIETS

J. A. Seminoff et al. [2002, J. Herpetology 36(3):447-453] studied the diet of green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) at Bahí a de los Angeles in the Gulf of California, Mexico. From 1995 through 1999, they collected esophageal lavage and fecal samples from live-captured turtles and analyzed stomach contents from stranded carcasses encountered in the study area. Foods ingested did not vary with carapace length. Turtles consumed diverse marine algae, with the filamentous red alga *Gracilariopsis lemaneiformis* the most abundant; other common genera included *Gracilaria*, *Codium*, *Ulva* and *Chaetomorpha*. Turtles also augmented their diet with animal matter; 25 nonalga food items were identified, including sponges, tube worms, sea pens, and sea hares. Substratum and anthropogenic debris such as plastic bags and nylon cord were commonly recovered in diet samples.

Advertisements

For sale: rats and mice—pinkies, fuzzies and adults. Quantity discounts. Please send a SASE for pricelist or call Bill Brant, *THE GOURMET RODENT*, 6115 SW 137th Avenue, Archer FL 32618, (352) 495-9024, E-mail: GrmtRodent@aol.com.

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For sale: complete set of *Vivarium* magazines. All in excellent to mint condition. Best offer plus postage. Cory Hoffman, 2019 W. Winchester Drive, Freeport IL 61032, (815) 233-5567 after 5 P.M. Central time.

For sale: natural history books. Books make good Christmas gifts. Wykes, Alan, *Snake Man—The Story of C.J.P. Ionides*, 1960, 221 pp., b&w photos, DJ, edges of pages browned with age, the adventures of Ionides collecting herps in Africa, $20; Ditmars, *Snakes of the World*, 1946 (1931), 207 pp., 84 b&w plates, DJ, $l8; Edwards, Hugh, *Crocodile Attack in Australia*, 1988, 192 pp., color photos, Australian edition, DJ, $30; Mount, Robert, *The Reptiles & Amphibians of Alabama*, 1975, 345 pp., 350 figs. (b&w photos and range maps), softbound, $22; Smith, Philip, *The Amphibians and Reptiles of Illinois*, 1961 (reprinted 1971), 298 pp., 251 figs.; softbound, $25; Roedelberger and Groschoff, *Wildlife of the South Seas*, 1967, 216 pp., numerous color and b&w photos, no DJ, contains info and photos of marine iguanas, Galapagos tortoises, and Australian lizards, among many herps, $20; Neff, Nancy, *The Big Cats, The Paintings of Guy Coheleach*, 1986 (1982), 243 pp., 154 illustrations including 59 plates in full color, DJ, as new condition—a handsome book, $42; Bailey and Niedrach, *Birds of Colorado*, 1965, two large volumes, 895 pp., 124 color plates plus b&w photos—the definitive work on Colorado birds, as new condition, $150. All books hardbound and in excellent condition except as noted. William Turner, 6014 Blue Ridge Drive, Apt A, Highlands Ranch, CO 80130, (720) 344-6197. E-mail: turnerbmrk@prodigy.net.

For sale: Eastern indigo snake, *Drymarchon couperi*: '89 red-throated male, $500 to USDI permit holder or WI Resident only. Ed Stone DVM, Madison WI, (608) 238-2891; aor@itis.com.

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Wanted: big-headed turtles; mata mata turtles; Mexican giant mud turtles (*Staurotypus triporcatus*); exceptionally large common snappers (45 lbs. & up); large alligator snappers (over 90 lbs.); spectacled caiman from Trinidad, Tobago and Surinam; dwarf caiman; smooth-fronted caiman; albino turtles (except red-eared sliders). Walt Loose, (610) 926-6028, 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. or after 11:30 P.M. Eastern Time.

Line ads in this publication are run free for CHS members—$2 per line for nonmembers. Any ad may be refused at the discretion of the Editor. Submit ads to: Michael Dloogatch, 6048 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago IL 60659, (773) 588-0728 evening telephone, (312) 782-2868 fax, E-mail: <MADadder0@aol.com>.

NEW ADDRESS FOR THE ILLINOIS DNR

CHS members who annually renew permits or who otherwise need to reach the Illinois Department of Natural Resources by U.S. mail should note that, in August 2002, the main offices (located at various addresses in Springfield) of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources were consolidated to the IDNR's new headquarters. You should now address any postal correspondence to the appropriate office or program (e.g., Endangered Species) at: Illinois Department of Natural Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702.

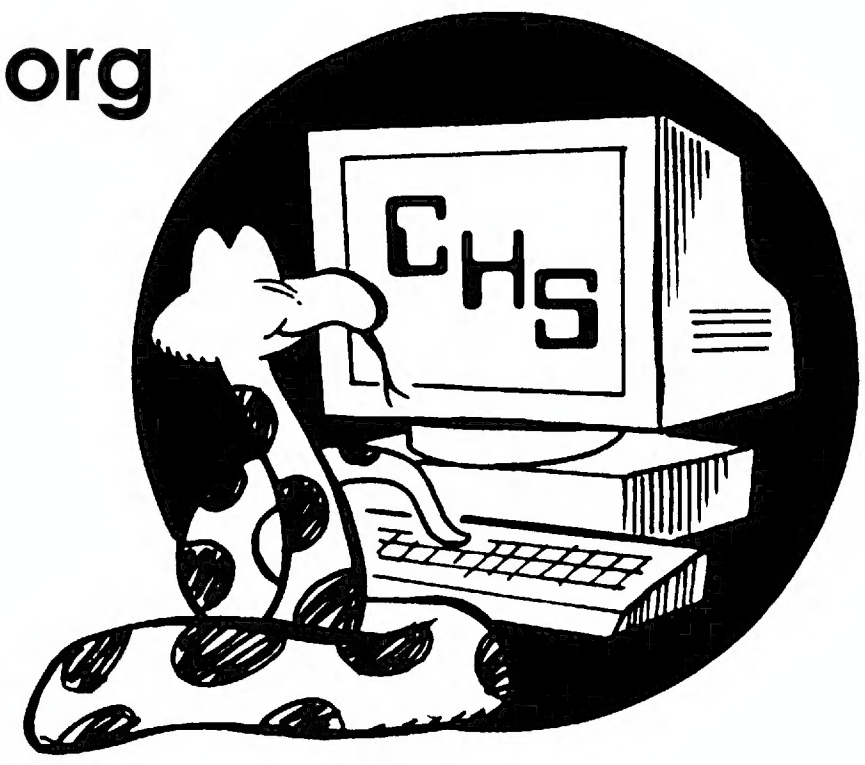
CHS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Have you ever thought about becoming more involved with CHS? Not-for-profit groups like CHS could not function without occasionally capitalizing on the volunteer efforts and professional skills contributed by our members. The CHS board has in past months identified a number of specialized skills which may be needed in the future to help with the mission and activities of the society. We will periodically post volunteer needs in this section, and will make similar announcements at monthly general meetings.

Our first needs: *LAYOUT, GRAPHIC DESIGN, PRINTING CONSULTANT.* The CHS is considering producing a series of high-quality, full-color educational posters. We will need help and consultation from members with professional backgrounds in graphic design and layout. Familiarity with color printing (additive and subtractive color correction) would also be helpful. If interested and qualified, E-mail Mike Redmer (CHSPublications@aol.com).

Next time you surf the WorldWide Web, crawl, run, slither, slide, jump, or hop over to the CHS web site!

www.chicagoherp.org



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Chicagoherp.org is accepting applications for banner advertisements or links from herpetoculturists and manufacturers of herp-related products. Visit the site and contact the webmaster for details on how you can sponsor CHS!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Chicago Herpetological Society will be held at 7:30 P.M., Wednesday, November 27, at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Cannon Drive and Fullerton Parkway, in Chicago. This meeting will include the annual election of officers and members-at-large of the CHS Board of Directors. After the voting, **Dr. Steve Barten** will provide us with two short programs: "Fossils and Herps of the White River Badlands" and "A Night in Grenada."

Because the last Wednesday in December is Christmas Eve, the December CHS meeting will be held one week earlier than usual –Wednesday, December 18. It's likely that the December *Bulletin* will not reach you before then, so please make a note of the meeting date. At the December 18 meeting, **Darrell Senneke**, Director of the World Chelonian Trust, will speak to us about the Asian turtle crisis.

The regular monthly meetings of the Chicago Herpetological Society now take place at Chicago's newest museum—the **Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**. This beautiful new building is at Fullerton Parkway and Cannon Drive, directly across Fullerton from the Lincoln Park Zoo. Meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, from 7:30 P.M. through 9:30 P.M. Parking is free on Cannon Drive. A plethora of CTA buses stop nearby.

Board of Directors Meeting

Are you interested in how the decisions are made that determine how the Chicago Herpetological Society runs? And would you like to have input into those decisions? If so, mark your calendar for the December 13 board meeting, to be held at the North Park Village Administration Building, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Chicago. To get there take the Edens Expressway, I-94, and exit at Peterson eastbound. Go a mile east to Pulaski, turn right and go south to the first traffic light. Turn left at the light into the North Park Village complex. At the entrance is a stop sign and a guardhouse. When you come to a second stop sign, the administration building is the large building ahead and to your left. There is a free parking lot behind the building.

The Chicago Turtle Club

The monthly meetings of the Chicago Turtle Club are informal; questions, children and animals are welcome. Meetings normally take place at the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago. Parking is free. For more info call Lisa Koester, (773) 508-0034, or visit the CTC website: http://www.geocities.com/~chicagoturtle.

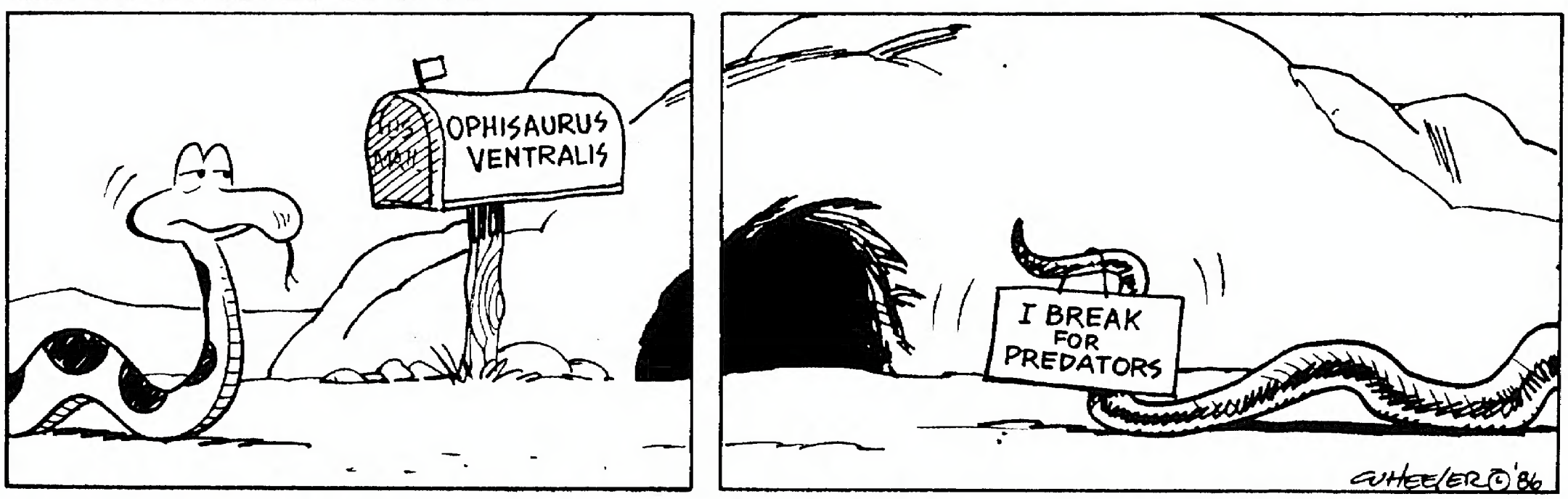
HERP OF THE MONTH

Each monthly meeting will showcase a different herp. CHS members are urged to bring one specimen of the "Herp of the Month" to be judged against the entries from other CHS members. Prizes will be awarded to the top three winners. For November, members are invited to bring **bullsnakes, pinesnakes or gophersnakes**, that is, any members of the genus *Pituophis*.

DUES INCREASE

Effective November 1, 2002, the annual cost of an Individual Membership in the Chicago Herpetological Society increased by $3 –from $22 to $25. Similarly, the cost of a Family Membership has gone up from $25 to $28 per year. All other categories of membership are unchanged. This is our first dues increase since August 1993.

THE ADVENTURES OF SPOT



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